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Investigating the role of business marketing techniques in sales process

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Purpose. The main purpose of the research is to investigate the role of the marketing strategies and to verify if adopting a set of marketing strategies matching the company's operation to can be a successful way to generate growth in sales and loyal customers for all sized businesses.

Design/Method/Approach. This research consists of a systematic literature review of academic articles compatible with the marketing field topics. A hypothesis is designed based on a theoretical framework and two case studies are investigated. It is tested through applying examples of two renowned companies, Xerox and HubSpot, that adopted their preferred set of marketing techniques and gained higher profits and larger loyal customer segments.

Findings. Based on collected data and its analysis, it can be said that following correctly selected marketing techniques can lead to increased sales and loyal consumers.

Practical implications. Companies' marketing policies about choosing marketing channels needs to carefully be monitored and updated in order to reach long-term successful effects.

Originality/Value. The negotiation process between buyer and seller is strict, long-term and complex in business. Subsequently, selling the product is not sufficient if the buyers do not get offered good quality services to leave them pleased and consequently loyal in the long term. Thus, this research analyses the positive impact marketing techniques can have in the sales processes and in the customer loyalty.

Paper type – empirical.

Keywords: business marketing; consumer satisfaction; consumer loyalty; case study.

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Дослідження ролі маркетингових технік у процесі продажів

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Мета роботи – вивчити роль маркетингових стратегій, а також перевірити, чи може адаптування маркетингових стратегій, відповідних роботі компанії, стати успішним способом збільшення продажів і лояльності споживачів для компаній різного розміру.

Дизайн/Метод/Підхід дослідження. Дане дослідження містить системний огляд літератури в області відповідних маркетингових тем. На підставі теоретичної бази розроблена гіпотеза і проаналізовані два приклади з практики. На прикладі двох відомих компаній – Xerox і HubSpot – підтверджена гіпотеза про те, що адаптація серії маркетингових технік призводить до збільшення доходів та зростання сегментів лояльних споживачів.

Результати дослідження. Грунтуючись на зібраних даних та їх аналізі, зроблено висновок, що дотримання правильно обраної маркетингової техніки сприяє збільшенню числа продажів і кількості лояльних споживачів.

Практичне значення дослідження. Необхідний уважний моніторинг маркетингової політики компанії щодо вибору маркетингових каналів. Дана політика повинна оновлюватися для досягнення успіху в довгостроковій перспективі.

Оригінальність/Цінність/Наукова новизна дослідження.

Процес переговорів між покупцем і продавцем є строгим, довгостроковим і складним у реалізації. Отже, звичайний продаж товару не є достатньою умовою, якщо покупець при цьому не отримує обіцяної якості обслуговування. Задоволеність споживача призводить до лояльності в довгостроковій перспективі. Таким чином, дане дослідження сфокусовано на впливі маркетингових технік на процес продажів і лояльність споживачів.

Тип статті – емпірична.

Ключові слова: бізнес-маркетинг; задоволеність споживача; лояльність споживача; приклади з практики.

Исследование роли маркетинговых техник в процессе продаж

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Цель работы – изучить роль маркетинговых стратегий, а также проверить, может ли перенимание маркетинговых стратегий, соответствующих работе компании, стать успешным способом увеличения продаж и лояльности потребителей для компаний разного размера.

Дизайн/Метод/Подход исследования. Данное исследование включает системный обзор литературы в области соответствующих маркетинговых тем. На основании теоретической базы разработана гипотеза и проанализированы два примера из практики. На примере двух известных компаний – Xerox и HubSpot – подтверждена гипотеза о том, что перенимание серии маркетинговых техник приводит к увеличению доходов и росту сегментов лояльных потребителей.

Результаты исследования. Основываясь на собранных данных и их анализе, сделан вывод, что следование правильно выбранной маркетинговой технике ведет к увеличению числа продаж и количества лояльных потребителей.

Практическое значение исследования. Необходим внимательный мониторинг маркетинговой политики компании в отношении выбора маркетинговых каналов. Данная политика должна обновляться для достижения успеха в долгосрочной перспективе.

Оригинальность/Ценность/Научная новизна исследования.

Процесс переговоров между покупателем и продавцом является строгим, долгосрочным и сложным в реализации. Следовательно, обычная продажа товара не является достаточным условием, если покупатель при этом не получает обещанного качества обслуживания. Удовлетворенность потребителя приводит к лояльности в долгосрочной перспективе. Таким образом, данное исследование сфокусировано на влиянии маркетинговых техник на процесс продаж и лояльность потребителей.

Тип статьи – эмпирическая.

Ключевые слова: бизнес-маркетинг; удовлетворенность потребителя; лояльность потребителя; примеры из практики.

Introduction

Marketing orientation of companies affects the establishment of strategic innovations in gaining and developing a competitive advantage (Contò et al., 2015). Marketing tools and strategies can increase the knowledge of consumer's expectations and needs in a way that consumer empowerment can be considered as a process of delegation in strategic decisions for improving existing products and creating new ones (Fiore et al., 2016). However, over the last decades, the growth and development of markets rivalry has increased, and it has augmented the firms' tendency of to use messages to more rigorously persuade consumers (Esmailpour, & Aram, 2016). Indeed, as the consumer is exposed to increasing number of messages every day, it results in growing insensitivity of consumers towards commercial messages over the long-term periods (Akdoğan, & Altuntaş, 2015). The number of critics about advertisement has increased (Kaikati, & Kaikati, 2004), consumers have serious doubts as to reliability (Weisberg et al., 2007), a previous feeling of being deceived cause a negative attitude to all other advertisements (Calfee, & Ringold, 1988; Obermiller, & Spangenberg, 1998; Darke, & Ritchie, 2007), and an unconscious reluctance and feeling of discomfort to the brand logo in the consumer persuasion process reduce the trust to the company (Teixeira, 2012). Modern consumers desire to be contacted occasionally with the information, rather than being bothered frequently (Boaz et al., 2010). Due to this, marketing techniques have an outstanding role in the sales process (Bernritter et al. 2017). One of the most important tasks of marketing is creating and communicating value to the consumer. The reason behind this is to create a motivation for consumers' need, loyalty and profitability. Gong et al. (2016) show and confirmed that the consumer is indeed a value maker. Their study was based on the value itself, the wishes of the consumer and the quality of the relationship between consumer and supplier.

Right marketing can play a crucial role in doing and creating successful business. Kotler and Armstrong (2015) define marketing as managing profitable consumer relationships. Today it is not just "telling and selling" any more, marketing must be understood in the sense of satisfying and exceeding consumers' needs (Wu et al., 2012). In this context, special importance has to be given to business marketing. While the consumer marketing is aimed at large groups, the negotiation process in business marketing between buyer and seller is more personalized. In most cases, these negotiations are strict, long-term and multiplex (Davidson, 2015). Ineffective and poor communication ensures loss of future consumers and drain of the current ones (Essays, UK., 2017). Marshal (2015) points out that the future companies will depend on the innovations around the consumer rather than on product innovations. Buyers play a crucial role when it comes to judgments about the future efficiencies, effectiveness, and networking competencies of various suppliers (Möller, & Törröen, 2003). Subsequently, selling the product is not sufficient since the buyers interested in the product need to be satisfied.

Nowadays, businesses are working for their business consumers as opposed to simply selling to them. Marketing is not only about selling their products, but it is more about consumer care, taking care of the problematic cases, gaining insights in specific needs and wants etc (Monger, 2014). Similarly, to other spheres, the business industry also requires necessary developmental stages and innovations. Consequently, B4B was developed due to the expansion of the B2B structures and operational concepts. However, here it should be noted that this article will not be discussing the differences between B2B and B4B concepts in detail. Yet, the key idea of B2B marketing is to generate successful rate of sales, while B4B (Business for Business) is more concerned with achieving consumer loyalty (Wood et al., 2013). Companies that choose this approach communicate with consumers understand their needs and fulfil them because it is crucial for companies to start playing an active, ongoing role in the day-to-day life of their consumers' businesses. Also, it is beneficial to be

viewed more as partners rather than vendors or sales representatives (Telogis, 2015). Research in the marketing industry often does not consider it as a great opportunity to collaborate with consumers (Formentini, & Romano, 2016): indeed the development of strong relations with the consumer becomes a crucial element in reaching a competitive advantage (Garrigos-Simon et al., 2012; Fuchs, & Schreier, 2011).

According to current trends it needs to highlight that company understands the problem and has a solution to offer to all types of consumers issues (DeSena, 2003). Organizational buying behaviour is much more complex than individual buying decision-making (Dimple, & Sujata 2015). Therefore, benefits from marketing and attribution of results seem harder for B2B companies rather than B2C firms. The reason is that B2B clients want to be given compatible knowledge and provided with expertise. B2B consumers often want to look like the workplace rock stars or heroes thanks to their excellent decisions. Conversely, B2C consumers prefer to enjoy themselves, be happy with their purchases and have their needs adequately fulfilled. (SpotHub, 2017). It should be emphasized that organizational buying cycle takes longer as more people are involved in purchase decisions and sales are made for rational, not emotional, reasons (Petersen, 2015). On the other hand, B4B (Business-for-business) shows many companies working toward a common goal of ever-greater end-consumer satisfaction (Lloyd, 2016). A B4B means making a brand famous that brings together interests of all the businesses; it better supports the knowledge exchange by building strict communications, collaboration and stronger alliances (Lloyd, 2016). As a result, marketing techniques are to be considered as important tools for businesses in order to determine their basic strategy and approach.

Research Question

The aim of this paper is to give some insight on concepts discussed above by highlighting the role of marketing techniques aimed at increasing consumer segments, firm's revenues and at establishing stronger brand loyalty.

Structure of paper

The structure of this paper is as follows: the next section provides a literature analysis concerning the role of the marketing techniques, passing through the analysis of different opinions on consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty. Further, methods are discussed, and two case studies are investigated. Finally, we discuss results in the conclusive section and recommendations close the paper shedding some light on the role of marketing techniques in sales process.

Literature Review

Marketing Techniques

Brennan and Croft (2012) argue that active participation in professional B2B social media networks adds value to B2B brands. This process contributes to the industry through processes of value creation, change and leadership. Authors add that social media is a valuable component of B2B market driving strategy. Cawsey and Rowley (2016) used of semi-structured interviews in France, Ireland, the UK and the USA to investigate the B2B Social Media Engagement Taxonomy by proposing a B2B social media strategy framework. The latter identifies six components of a social media strategy: monitoring and listening, empowering and engaging employees, creating compelling content, stimulating electronic word of mouth, evaluating and selecting channels, and enhancing brand presence through integrating social media (Cawsey, & Rowley, 2016). B2B selling processes involve all actors of the real-life experiences in a complex, not linear and dynamic way best described as "business maneuvering" (Åge, 2011).

Words matter but they are not enough to create a significant impact. Because B2B marketing started actively using social media platforms, developing effective content became even more important. First of all, because marketing is newsworthy currently, marketing experts recognize the importance of content which is why content marketing becomes a new field in marketing research (Pažeraić, & Repovienė, 2016). Content marketing is a marketing technique aimed at creating and at distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable consumer action (Institute-Content-Marketing, 2017). Content marketing differs from regular marketing in that companies' commercializing the products can either attract or repel consumers. There are a lot of types of content an organization can create for the target audience. Some of the most commonly used and passed around strategies through social platforms are info graphics, podcasts videos, etc. While traditional marketing meticulously follows the needs of the targeted audience, does extensive research on their needs and wishes, content marketing techniques grab attention of the audience by being present on many different channels of communication with an interesting content (Ruffolo, 2017). Though it sounds simple, giving non-boring information to consumer is the key to successful business operations, loyal consumers and increasing revenues; content marketing is a sophisticated model that takes a large amount of time, money and creativity (Institute-Content-Marketing, 2017). According to Miller (2013) content marketing definition has a non-conclusive nature, as Miller claims developing every definition is majorly affected by the way it has been practiced in all firms. This type of marketing involves consumers as an essential part of the brand development (Ahmad et al., 2015; Merz et al., 2017; Ramaswamy, & Ozcan, 2016). So, companies have to identify the target group and by responding their needs and wishes they can identify themselves from competitors. Comparably, B4B companies have to optimize everything behind the scenes and standardize everything so far. It is a question of covert marketing what means doing commercial messages at unexpected times and styles in a way that consumers are not even aware of it. The most of B4B buyers find the sellers, before sellers even know that someone is looking for them; Also, Golfetto et al. (2006) report in their work that they found industrial buyers selecting suppliers by profiling and evaluating supplier resources and competencies. This process was not limited to marketing communication and was often initiated by a buyer in a pre-contractual phase to align supplier competencies with that buyer's business processes. Later, the supplier and buyer work together to experiment if the supplier's experience fits the buyer's business requirements and needs the best. Great consumer service helps B4B firms develop a better brand name as the assessment of brand value is a shifting process rather than an act, and begins "upstream" with assessments of the competencies available to the buyer firm, backed by the reputation of the supplier firm (Ballantyne, & Aitken, 2007). Therefore, marketing should be focused on creating and distributing valuable, consistent and relevant message to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable consumer action (Institute-Content-Marketing, 2017). The idea of creating such content to share in online media, especially social media, as part of the marketing mix, is generally considered to be a pull strategy in branding and other related disciplines (Christodoulides, 2009). The idea of pull strategy is that the actual consumers' demand drives the supply chain in which the suppliers in the upstream supply after receiving information about the customers' demand (Mensah, & Merkurjev, 2014).

According to Wiersema and Treacy (1996), organizations are eligible to follow existing value strategies: 1. Operational Excellence - Operational Excellence organizations strive to apply the product to be leaders in the market by selling at low price and produce high quantity using standardized tasks. A good example would include major fashion brands such as H&M and fast food chain McDonalds (Haberberg, & Rieple, 2008); 2. Product Leadership - Companies pursuing product leadership, producing

high quality products or services. Also described as very innovative and ingenious. Such as Mercedes (Kaplan, & Norton, 2004) and Tesla (Brodo, 2016); 3. Consumer Intimacy - Companies pursuing consumer intimacy deliver products that are closely tailored to consumer needs and strive to achieve a high consumer loyalty. This could include banks such as ING and Rabobank (Bugel et al, 2011). It is advisable to meet at least two of these strategies for successful business (Treacy, & Wiersema, 1993).

Consumer satisfaction and loyalty

Even if the company sells technology, toasters, apartments or apps, its connection is with people, as highlighted by Ann Handley, chief content officer of MarketingProfs, HubSpot. Companies are made up of people, and when those people have the right tools, they can turn their business dreams into reality (SpotHub, 2017). So, understanding the emotional and cognitive interplay that impacts on any brand image might be a matter of assessing the degrees of emotional relevance, rather than assuming that absolute rationality applies (Ballantyne, & Aitken, 2007). The common phrase "consumers' problems solving" is still common. Marketing purpose should be to build a higher level of trust in buyers as they need to be sure in the company for making purchase decision especially in the case of B4B market.

Although all organizations strive to deliver their products/services according to what consumers look for, there may appear differences between the consumers' expectations and the real quality of product/service. When measuring the comparison between the consumer's expectations and the quality of the product it establishes a gap. Gap is a deficiency of the service that was expected by the consumer: for example, if the expectations of the service are higher than the quality experienced, it will have a negative outcome (De Vries et al., 1994).

The general concept of looking for different methods to help consumers achieve successful outcomes will never be complete. The ability to match and exceed what competitors can offer will keep the company from getting left behind in the competition. It is important to identify smart ways to accommodate the demands of a new generation of consumers who expect an active, ongoing involvement from traditional B2B sellers. Thus, companies have to find out exact reasons why consumers go to them and what do they expect from the product/service provided. Therefore, companies have to look at ways of understanding their consumer's pain points better and then adapt their solution (Needles, 2011). They have to take the time to communicate with their consumers, particularly the ones that had a successful outcome, to find out exactly how their product/service was used, so it can be shared with new consumers. Then they must review after-sales service - define the process for looking after consumers after the sale is signed, monitor for "buyer's remorse" etc (Needles, 2011).

Despite the assumed importance of consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty, some academic articles express different opinions (Lewis, 1991). There appears the question if consumer satisfaction is the right goal for a company. For example, with consumer satisfaction we look at the completion of consumer needs, which Lewis and Booms (1983) define as a measure of how well the service delivered matches consumers' expectations. Another example is that, by giving the consumers what they want, when they want it, for a reasonable price, within the operating limits. These consumers will be provided with a better service than they expected (Lewis, 1988). In the first example, the consumers' expectations are met as a standard need, compared to the second example in which an attempt is made to exceed consumers expectations. The theory of Lewis (1991) clearly substantiated the idea that without consumers' satisfaction, it is impossible to achieve the desired result of acquiring loyal consumers. Lewis (1991) claims that consumers will show loyalty to an organization if they are really satisfied with the product or service that the organization offers.

Precisely, consumer loyalty is characterized by *Pelsmacker and Van Kenhove (2014)* as a concept where a lot of confusion exists; it can be divided into two parts - repeated purchases and loyalty. A regular consumer can buy the brand without being truly faithful to. Being faithful is stronger because a commitment is made to this brand. This commitment ultimately determines the probability that a consumer buys the brand repeatedly or not. This turnover or outflow is determined by consumer satisfaction but also by price, switching costs and the brand relationship with the customer. The following leads to customer loyalty in the long term. It appears that consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty have an overlap but are not the same (*Lewis, 1991*). The consumers are more expected promote the product to their partners if they are loyal and will remain loyal only if they are satisfied with the service and quality the products and services.

Methods

This study consists of a systematic review of academic articles on the proposed topic (*Baumeister, & Leary, 1997; Borenstein et al. 2009*). Different literature was analysed and reviewed, and worked as a ground to base the hypothesis on. In order to test the hypothesis, our work relied on a case study of two successful companies with B4B marketing strategy: Xerox and HubSpot. In order to collect data, the work makes use of the methodology of the research triangulation by combining primary (analysis of case studies) and secondary data (analysis of previous research and companies' reports and documents on website); the research triangulation allows to exploit the synergistic effects of combining investigative techniques to decrease the bias of a single observation in comparison of multiple data (*Eisenhardt, 1989 and 2002*).

Xerox and HubSpot were selected to represent two different business operations with non-similar product/services but with a similar marketing strategy. The work established comparisons across cases looking for both similarities and differences in order to identify conditions (factors) that led these two companies to success (*Yin, 2009*). Based on the theoretical framework and practical examples of two cases, this research was focused on determining the impact of marketing techniques in sales processes. Therefore, the core mission of doing the research through academic articles and the case studies was to understand if the successful marketing techniques worked for these two companies. Hence, other businesses that follow the same marketing techniques would also be successful in terms of larger sales and higher brand loyalty. Therefore, Our hypothesis of research is as follows:

Hypothesis: All companies that follow current B2B and B4B marketing techniques can reach larger sales and more loyal customers.

Case studies

Xerox

Xerox Corporation – a business process and document management company - is chosen to discuss as a global brand with a successful marketing strategy (*Ruch, & Nazemetz, 2012*). Its name is declared as a generic word and many dictionaries use "xerox" as a synonym for "photocopy", including the Oxford English Dictionary. Before, in 2012, Xerox Corporation faced a marketing challenge where company was outstanding among competitors in the crowded IT solutions sector. Xerox had a differentiation issue on the market by being perceived too similar to their competitors, where majority of the companies discussed how they could solve problems for consumers. It was not enough to keep repeating the common phrase "We solve problems" as majority of its competitors were (*Diamond, 2015*). Thus, Xerox needed to change their method of communication with buyers, to focus on consumers who had solved their problems by analysing these factors to help them make progress.

The company wanted to use this information to build appropriate relationships with their future buyers and increase their reliability by starting appropriate conversations from sales' representatives. *Susan E. Robinson (1997)* ex-Vice-President, Education and Training, at Xerox Canada, portrayed how the considerable challenge in quality program was the tremendous achievement of higher levels of consumer satisfaction. For this purpose, Xerox designed the website "<http://www.getoptimistic.com>" which content was crucial to be delivered to C-level audience (that is the managerial team). The audience were decision-makers who avoid the natural thinning out process made by administrative assistants.

In 2012, Xerox started the partnership with agencies Roberts Communications and Babcock & Jenkins; and co-jointly with Forbs it issued a magazine called "The Chief Optimist". They faced a very common and expected difficulty to avoid the administrative staff who do not allow the company to achieve their targeted audience. Often the administrators go through their mail first where majority of direct postal mail pieces do not make it to executives. In this case, administrative staff of recipient companies filtered Xerox's offering as they packaged it as an advertisement and did not allow the postal mail to reach the decision-makers. As Xerox marketers needed to acquire the magazine to C-level audience, they also elaborated a digital version with video and they proclaimed it via e-mail. Xerox apprehended demand generation method that focused on targeted marketing audience to drive awareness and interest in a company's products and/or services. The Rochester-based agency intended to create the business publications that were practical and beneficial. Due to this, the publication was perceived by value and not only collateral sales which then led to the agency developing the Chief Optimist campaign. Xerox was able to acquire relevant information from Forbs. The articles published in the magazine were about company's tactics, how it was working with each consumer and solving their problems, as it also contained suggestions from executives. Consumer stories began to be written in Chief Optimist, where the company gave promotion to the digital properties through e-mail and printed cards. Sales representatives used a personalized method for customers to distribute magazines. The digital editions contained multimedia and video clips of consumer case studies, which helped Chief Optimist be a well-versed magazine and its content helped achieve to "Get Optimistic" campaign. The goal was to have insights to share, so representatives could bring relevance to a meeting. If a representative did not have sufficient amount of information about a company before a meeting, then they would be able to acquire more information at the meeting. It gave them a competitive edge, where the magazine helped give Xerox salespeople a reason to call. It changed the dynamic of the conversation and helped open the doors to more possibilities.

Thanks to "Get Optimistic" campaign, 70% of targeted companies interacted with the microsite, readership increased 300-400% over previous e-mail campaigns, added 20,000 new contacts, generated over 1,000 scheduled appointments, and get this: yielded \$1.3 billion in pipeline revenue (*Diamond, 2015; Petersen, 2015; Woolard, 2013; Klein, 2014*).

HubSpot

HubSpot is the world's leading inbound marketing and sales platform (*McLaren, 2016*). This social media seller software, widely appeared on the market in 2006. In two years, it reached \$2.2 million in sales and in 4 years - \$52 millions (*Petersen, 2015*). The company differentiated itself from competitors by thinking differently and it had a consistent flow of visitors to the blog as a result. The diversified approach helped the firm claim its uniqueness based on the competitors' feedback. In other words, the managerial team chose to observe competitors to build their business based on other's needs.

In 2014, HubSpot team noticed that consumers had gotten good at blocking out interruptive marketing and sales tactics. The previously used, tried and true tactics of old (direct mail, email blasts, cold calls) were no longer effective. As HubSpot team watched competitors analysed how tiny blog (Dharmesh's blog On Start-ups) with no budget had generated more traffic than companies with professional marketing teams and with bigger budgets, they concluded that people do not want to be interrupted by marketers or harassed by salespeople, on the contrary they want to be helped. Consequently, the leading team decided to make the marketing and sales process more consumer oriented, to treat buyers as people, not as numbers on a spreadsheet. Further, the original idea strived to build an inbound community and to help people achieve their business goals by being more personalized and humane. As a result, a new platform was created and was named HubSpot. Its leadership team that implemented the term "inbound marketing" that clearly describes company's method of work. In fact, the strategy entirely meets B4B marketing purposes to think differently, to study consumers and do the innovative business to meet and exceed consumers' needs.

HubSpot team builds the reputation among consumers, where they invest and create results for potential buyers before they are purchased. By teaching potentials important new skills and problem-solving methods (for free), HubSpot becomes confident in themselves and is worthy of consumer trust (Molander, 2006). This company was first who has released guidebooks for targeted market and then frequently updates its insights as the online marketing changes. HubSpot team makes constant updates based on market changes. With the best advices in a short-span they have earned the trust from qualified consumers, as they don't disclose information without previous research and valuable content. It focused on social media and used the information about target market, their needs and interests were acquired for

answer consumers' demands. By solving consumers' problems HubSpot made an upscale of sales. It created videos and blog posts including the stories about other companies' success that illustrate and prove HubSpot's competence. Therefore, it offers assistance to future consumers, so they can attempt to achieve success as well (Petersen, 2015). Based on this case, HubSpot portrays the previous results to the companies, as it deserves trust in consumers and then offers help to reach similar success. Therefore, success is offered without being hostile with marketing strategies.

Results and discussion

In this research, current trends, marketing techniques and their successful effect businesses were discussed. Subsequently, two case studies were described for the example of a successful marketing strategy, a collaborative thinking and an accurate addressing of consumer needs. The studies showed that two different companies with non-similar product/services, yet similar B2B and B4B marketing strategies gained considerably larger sales and consequently more loyal customers. In the frame of "Get Optimistic" campaign, Xerox published business advices in the magazine, built the trust and reputation among consumers, obtained their loyalty and differentiated itself from competitors. Xerox used established negotiations with these companies to convert them to consumers. Similarly, HubSpot's main operative vision is to give advices to consumers and other businesses. Although, these two case study companies shared similar marketing strategies, there were a few diverse contributors to their increased sales and customer loyalty rates. The table 1 shows the specific strategies used by Xerox and HubSpot in order to highlight differences and similarities.

Table 1

Marketing strategies used by Xerox and HubSpot*

Strategy	Description	Case Studies	
		Xerox	HubSpot
Social Media Strategy	A social media strategy defines how the organization will use social media to achieve its communications aims and the supporting platform and tools it will use (Cawsey, & Rowley, 2016).	+	-
Content Marketing Strategy	Content marketing is a marketing technique aimed at creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable consumer action (Institute-Content-Marketing, 2017).	+	+
Pull Strategy	Pull strategy stimulates consumers' demand to obtain product distribution. Suppliers in the upstream supply after receiving information about the customers' demand (Mensah, & Merkuriev, 2014).	+	+
Covert Marketing Strategy	Covert marketing means doing commercial messages at unexpected times and styles in a way that consumers are not even aware of it (Wiersema, & Treacy, 1996).	-	+
Value Strategies			
Operational Excellence	Operational Excellence organizations strive to apply the product to be leaders in the market by selling at low price and produce high quantity using standardized tasks.	-	-
Product Leadership	Companies pursuing product leadership, producing high quality products or services. Also described as very innovative and ingenious.	+	+
Consumer Intimacy	Companies pursuing consumer intimacy deliver products that are closely tailored to consumer needs and strive to achieve a high consumer loyalty.	+	+

*Source: our processing.

Xerox corporation used social media to build the trust as the firm used previous experience of assisting other businesses and promised new consumers to do the same for them as well. Conversely, HubSpot built the trust and the reputation among consumers without the help of social media or the magazine articles. The firms started operating as the representation of those communication channels by establishing its brand image as the communication tool along with assistant in business success.

Concisely, in both examples we have the strategies oriented to gain consumers' loyalty and trust in innovative ways. Hence, it led these companies to a bigger market share and solid profit

numbers. HubSpot was building the reputation while consumers did not have a direct message that they were influenced by marketing tools of this company. Consumers may have thought that they were researching the company themselves to get the best service out of it but instead they were under the effects of well-planned marketing of the company in the first place. It needs to be noticed that both examples satisfied the models of not only B2B market but also B4B market. Both companies are consumer oriented, meaning it is a priority to first identify the problems, design methods for solving them and then suggest products/services to consumers that are more likely to satisfy the needs. The case study companies created the value proposition

that Kotler and Armstrong (2015) describe as characterized by a unique offering from the organization to the consumer that is specifically tailored to his or her needs. As a result, Xerox and HubSpot did not just satisfy their consumers' needs and expectations but also exceeded the expectations. Both firms have gained and hold on to the solid market share by attracting new consumers through various marketing strategies, communicating effectively, constantly studying the consumers' needs and staying ahead of competitors.

Conclusions

Organizations are adopting business strategies in order to face global challenges by means of the world wide web on international markets in a vaster manner as internet trends develop (Erickson, & Rothberg, 2002). Therefore, marketing can be an important element to do business successfully especially on B4B market, where B4B buyers are dynamically involved in the sales processes (Möller, 2003). According to Akdoğan and Altuntaş (2015) the insensitivity of consumers towards commercial messages is growing, so innovative marketing techniques need to be implemented which will meet consumers' needs. According to our research, merely selling the product is not enough if the companies do not adopt the extended B4B strategies as well. The mixture of both techniques enables both sales growth and higher customer loyalty when intertwined and used effectively. As a result, it can be confirmed that doing the business successfully requires companies to be present, communicate with consumers, understand and address their problems. Yet, all companies need to be flexible and adapt the marketing mix strategies to their own mission, goals and complementary business processes. Two case studies were used to determine the acceptance of the hypothesis. These cases showed us that correctly selected business marketing techniques and channels can lead to increased sales, loyal consumers and competitive strengths (tab. 2).

Table 2

The results achieved by Xerox and HubSpot*

	Xerox	HubSpot
Object of Sale	product	service
Process	Xerox published business advices in the magazine instead of doing advertisement of its product directly.	HubSpot invested and created results for potential buyers before they were purchased. Company showed to the consumers quality of their service in advance.
Final results:		
increased sales	+	+
loyal consumers	+	+
competitive strengths	+	+

*Source: our processing.

Before deciding on a strategy, it is advisable for the company to define properly and clearly the mission, the vision, the market segments and the distinctiveness of the services. Then, it is crucial studying the selected market segment including buyers' and competitors', their problems, interests, strategies and based on this information defining own method to conduct business. According to (Lloyd, 2016), current companies need to study and to solve consumers' problems, to satisfy their needs and to go above and beyond to exceed them. This leads to gain and strengthen leading positions on the market at the time. Companies' marketing policy about choosing strategy needs to be carefully monitored and updated for long-term successful effects. This research only contains theoretical case studies and is not conclusive. It would be effective if a statistical research was

carried out on the topic of investigating the role of marketing techniques in sales processes. With the development of our theoretical concept, some issues appeared related to lack of statistical data. Field research is a necessary channel to collect trustworthy data. It would be a more conclusive and effective research if B2B and B4B approach companies are involved in research process and quantitative analysis is held.

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